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General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 11 October 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/67/502)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee (A/67/502) that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The President: Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter" without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 67/2).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda items 115 and 116

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: I welcome this opportunity to address the Assembly at the start of the debate on how to further strengthen the authority of the General Assembly. This is the only body in which all countries come together as sovereign equals to advance the aims of the Charter of the United Nations. To be able to meet the expectations of humankind, we must continue with the process of revitalizing and modernizing it.

The topic we are focusing on today is not a new one. As early as in 1948, the General Assembly recognized for the first time the need to adapt to changing circumstances. Near the end of the third session — in fact, one day after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted — an additional item was placed on the agenda of the plenary. It called for the creation of an ad hoc committee to consider methods and procedures which would enable the General Assembly to discharge its functions more effectively and expeditiously. Decades later, we continue to try to make headway in what has always been understood as a work in progress.

Let me begin by thanking Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Mrs. Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of the Gambia, for leading the Ad Hoc Working Group on

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the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session. Its report, contained in document A/66/891, together with resolution 66/294, adopted by consensus on the final day of that session, will guide our deliberations over the coming year.

For the first time, the two agenda items being discussed today have been scheduled to immediately follow the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. This was done to highlight their importance for the General Assembly. I believe it is critical for Member States to consistently implement that which has already been agreed in the Hall. That should be a core principle of effective multilateralism in the twenty-first century.

During this session, the Ad Hoc Working Group is mandated to review the inventory of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization, and to issue an updated version in its report to the plenary. It is my sincere hope that the findings of the review will suggest that we are moving in the right direction. So far, we have made some progress in a number of areas and, as President, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the process is further enhanced. I have already begun to build closer relationships with the other main bodies of the United Nations. I have started to exchange views with the Secretary-General, the Presidents of the Security Council and Economic and Social Council, and the Heads of various United Nations entities and specialized agencies, as well as with the Chairs of the Main Committees. Yesterday, in fact, I met with this last group. I thanked those in attendance for their commitment to our shared goals, and reiterated my belief that their deliberations are critical to advancing the plenary's agenda.

The increasing number of informal thematic debates and high-level events has contributed to the relevance of this body in addressing a growing number of global issues. As mandated by resolution 66/294, I will consult with Member States on the topics to be discussed, with a view to achieving results-oriented outcomes at the sixty-seventh session. As President, I will continue the tradition established by my predecessors and convene informal meetings of the plenary before and after Group of 20 (G-20) preparatory meetings, as well as the annual Heads of State or Government Summit.

In my view, however, we should work on increasing the complementarity of both policies and actions between the United Nations and key international economic players. It is with this in mind that I have proposed to launch a process leading to the establishment of an effective consultative framework between the General Assembly and international financial and trade institutions, as well as groupings such as the G-20. I believe that if we do this in the right way, the key actors' decisions can actually help strengthen and further revitalize the General Assembly.

The issue before us today has been on the General Assembly's agenda for decades, and some breakthroughs have been made. But I believe that much more needs to be done. Let us take a step back for a moment and consider the overall context in which the process of revitalization is taking place. Whether in the political, economic or technological realm, the world is becoming increasingly volatile and unpredictable. The overall scope and rapidity of the transformations we face are unprecedented in the annals of history. This global trend is likely to continue well into the future.

The speed of the changes taking place outside these walls is increasingly outpacing the tempo of the changes we are able to agree upon in this building. To retain the capacity to change the world for the better, we will need to find the strength to keep changing ourselves.I am afraid that we are confronted with the choice of either adapting to the new times, or simply being left behind to watch the gap between our duties and our capabilities widen by the day. I am not advocating haste or revolution, but I am trying to instil a sense of urgency.

I have tremendous faith in the United Nations. It is doubtless the greatest humanist project of the twentieth century, and I firmly believe that its greatness should extend well into the twenty-first. But that is not going to happen by default. A bold action is needed. It is up to the Member States — and to the Member States only — to propose and decide how to move forward. I was elected to serve them, to serve the General Assembly, and I pledge my unwavering commitment to its endeavours. I believe we all are in favour of revitalizing and thereby strengthening the authority of the Assembly. Yet, as the nineteenth-century Scottish social commentator Thomas Carlyle succinctly put it, conviction is worthless unless it is converted into conduct.

So let us conduct ourselves with the courage of our convictions. Let us revitalize this institution so that it remains, in the words of the Charter, a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. On behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I would like to thank you, Sir, for the level of priority you intend to dedicate to the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly and for having taken the initiative to start with that important topic immediately after the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/1). You can count on the Non-Aligned Movement to further convey the message thereof.

At the outset, allow me to express the gratitude of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement to Ambassador Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of the Gambia, and Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, for their tireless efforts and excellent work in co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session.

NAM welcomes the adoption of resolution 66/294 last September, by which the Assembly established the Working Group to discuss the issues related to the Assembly's revitalization during the sixty-seventh session, and to continue, in particular, to build on the progress achieved at past Assembly sessions and on previous resolutions, and to assess the status of their implementation.

That assessment and a clear identification of the underlying causes behind any lack of implementation are of utmost importance if we are to progressively eliminate the constraints that continue to prevent the process of revitalizing the General Assembly from realizing its full potential. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms the validity and relevance of its principled positions related to the process and reiterates its willingness to contribute effectively and constructively to the activities of the Working Group with a view to identifying ways and means to strengthen the role and authority of the Assembly.

We underline that the revitalization process is of a political nature, aimed mainly at strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ in the wider United Nations system. The Movement therefore reiterates the importance of the revitalization of the Assembly as an item that deserves consideration on an equal footing with other important topics and welcomes the President's decision y to address it at the beginning of the current session, so that we can make better use of today's deliberations in ourwork throughout the session. In our view, new ideas on how to explore further ways and means of reinvigorating the process in order to give it a higher profile warrant our consideration.

The Non-Aligned Movement emphasizes the need to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal organ of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among the organs within their respective Charter-based functions and powers. In that regard, the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions as well as all Assembly resolutions which clarify its relationship with the Assembly and other principal organs.

NAM reiterates its concern, raised at previous sessions, about the continuous attempt by the Security Council to encroach upon the powers and prerogatives of the General Assembly. Article 24 of the Charter does not endow the Security Council with the competence to address issues that fall within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

In the same vein, NAM calls on the Security Council to submit a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the work of the Council. Furthermore, the Movement is convinced that activities of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization will contribute greatly to the whole process of revitalization and supports the initiative of the creation of an open-ended working group to study the proper implementation of the Charter with respect to the functional relationship of its main organs, in particular the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the initiative, under the aforementioned Special Committee, on strengthening the role of the Organization and enhancing its effectiveness.

We reaffirm the role and authority of the General Assembly, including in questions related to international peace and security, and its intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic character, which have immensely contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the goals of the Organization. The Movement also reaffirms the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations as such and underscores the necessity to consult with Member States on initiatives and activities undertaken within the Organization and the right of all Member States to

express their positions before the Assembly at any time they wish to do so.

The General Assembly, as the policymaking organ of the Organization, holds the authority and the essential role of drafting the framework, upholding the principles and identifying the objectives of the wider United Nations system and its numerous organs, agencies and programmes. Furthermore, the Assembly should remain the principal organ that reviews the work of all its subsidiary organs and bodies. It should maintain its role and mandate in setting the priorities of the United Nations in considering all budgetary and administrative issues and reforms, including its absolute authority to allocate and reallocate financial and human resources, and in the appointment of senior officials of the Secretariat, in accordance with the Charter and relevant Assembly resolutions. In that regard, the prerogatives of the Assembly, as the chief oversight organ of the Organization, including on management and procurement for peacekeeping operations, must be respected.

While expressing its readiness to continue to support all ongoing efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the General Assembly, NAM wishes to state that it will oppose any approach that seeks to undermine or minimize the achievements of the Assembly, diminish its current role and functioning or raise questions about its relevance and credibility.

It is clear that while the prerogatives of the President of the General Assembly have not changed, his role and activities have evolved over the past years, in adapting to the growing activities, conferences and initiatives of the Assembly, performing official protocol functions, representing the Assembly around the world, and making the Assembly's work better known and more visible. Therefore, the activities of the Office of the President of the General Assembly have increased drastically over the years. The agenda of the Assembly and consequently that of its President include a tremendous number of issues.

The expansion of activities of the General Assembly — including the yearly adoption of more or less 300 resolutions and decisions, the establishment of working groups and facilitations that convene meetings and consultations throughout the year — has made the President's presence and active participation necessary during the whole session. The Assembly's workload is no longer limited to the main part of its session but rather covers the whole period from the opening of the session in September to its closing. This tremendous and increasing activity should of course be matched with the necessary resources, both human and financial.

NAM recalls in this regard that resolution 66/294 requests the Secretary-General to submit proposals, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, to review the budget allocations to the Office of the President of General Assembly, and emphasizes the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Office, including through the strengthening of its institutional memory. While noting with appreciation the progress already achieved in that regard, we are of the view that a particular effort should be devoted to the implementation of the already existing resolutions on this matter, as well as to identifying, during the upcoming discussions of the Working Group, ways and means to pursue this objective progressively and with determination.

Among other prerogatives and mandates of the General Assembly, the selection and appointment of Secretaries-General of the United Nations is of utmost importance. As for future Secretary-General mandates, NAM reaffirms the need for the selection of the Secretary-General to be transparent to and inclusive of all Member States and emphasizes, therefore, the need for the Assembly's participation in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General to be more active, effective and efficient, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the provisions of its resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301 and 66/294. NAM stresses the importance of the full implementation of those resolutions in the process of the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that a reinvigorated General Assembly, fully exerting its role and authority in a more responsive environment, would significantly contribute to the strengthening of the wider United Nations system and to the improvement of international governance and enhancement of multilateralism.

The President: I call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Tricot (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The European Union and its member States are strongly attached to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. In this context, we are

committed to revitalization and to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions. It is our wish that the General Assembly, as the only intergovernmental body with universal membership, be able to take up the challenge of conciliating legitimacy and efficiency in a context of emerging global challenges.

We believe that revitalization can be ensured only when the General Assembly takes relevant action on issues of common concern to the international community. By doing so, it lives up to its role as one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The European Union and its member States welcome the adoption of resolution 66/294. We would like to stress the importance of the implementation of all the Assembly's resolutions, including those on the revitalization of its work, and note the impact of such implementation on the authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly. The revitalization of the Assembly's work is clearly interlinked with the overall reform of the United Nations.

I would like to assure the Assembly that the European Union and its member States will continue to engage in a pragmatic manner in all future proceedings on the matter.

Mr. Advani (India): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, upon your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. You carry an enormous responsibility on your shoulders, and I wish you the very best for the year ahead.

Many of us with long living memories thought that the decade that ended in 2010 was the most challenging the international community had witnessed since the Second World War. But today we know better. Never before has the need for enduring calm and certainty in international relations been felt as ardently as over the past few years. The political upheaval in West Asia, the Gulf and North Africa that began in early 2011 and is still continuing is unprecedented, in terms of both scale and impact. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis, which began in the developed world and spread southwards, has exposed the downside of globalization and seriously undermined the Cold War-era structures of global governance.

Our responses to the most challenging sociopolitical and economic crises of the past 50 years cannot be patchy and half-hearted. The process should begin here at the United Nations and must be guided by a sense of urgency.

Today, I was listening very carefully to you, Sir, when you made your introductory remarks, and I fully agree with what you had to say regarding the urgency of what we propose to do today. To quote what you said this morning:

> "I am afraid we are confronted with the choice of either adapting to new times or simply being left behind to watch the gap between our duties and our capabilities widen by the day. I am not advocating haste or revolution, but I am trying to instil a sense of urgency."

The ongoing global financial and economic crisis is certainly asking us to do this immediately.

First and foremost, the deficit in global governance must be addressed. The Security Council, whose structure and set of governing norms harken back to the realities of the late 1940s, is, I stress, an anachronism. For the Council to reflect current geopolitical realities, it needs to be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. A reformed Council must include countries that are willing to bear additional burdens relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and be able to sustain worldwide campaigns against new and emerging global threats, including terrorism and piracy. That is exactly what you stressed, Sir, when you said that the gap between our duties and capabilities is widening by the day.

Next, we need to revitalize the General Assembly. We need to change it from a mere talking shop to a place where transnational issues that impact each and every one of us are addressed swiftly and truly global solutions prescribed. We therefore appreciate the importance that you, Sir, have attached to this issue. You told Member States on the first day of the current session, on 18 September 2012:

> "To revitalize this most universal of multilateral institutions is to renew our faith not only in the United Nations programmes and purposes, but also in each other. Member States can count on me to assist and facilitate in advancing the revitalization agenda, including the Security Council reform process" (*A/67/PV.1, p. 3*).

We welcome your resolve, Mr. President. You can count on India's support in this regard.

The starting point of my delegation's position is the firm belief that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is respected, both in letter and in spirit. The Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the United Nations in the formulation of multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. In particular, revitalization must restore the primacy of the United Nations in development matters.

Without prejudging the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which should start soon, I would like to place on record the Indian delegation's considered views on the two agenda items under consideration today.

First of all, it is critical that we establish a respectful relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to their respective mandates, in the spirit of the Charter. The Council should not encroach upon the Assembly's mandate through extremely wide and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression, and of the situations under which it can take action under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Assembly's competence in areas such as the process of standard-setting and codification of international law must be scrupulously respected.

It is clear that the Council's agenda is overburdened, to say the least, because it has anointed itself with the responsibility of dealing with issues that, though seemingly important, leave it with less time to deal with the real hotspots that constitute the real threats to international peace and security. The balance between the Assembly and the Council is only one of the dimensions of what needs to be addressed.

Secondly, the Assembly, we believe, must have a greater say in the process of selecting the Secretary-General. The continued circumscription of the Assembly's role and responsibilities in the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General needs to change in the interests of the United Nations system in general and the Assembly's prerogatives in particular.

We could also identify objective criteria for candidatures, including commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and extensive leadership, administrative and diplomatic experience, with due regard being given to regional rotation and gender equality. It would be equally useful and practical to encourage the formal presentation of candidatures in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with Member States and also requires candidates to present their views to all members of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, the Assembly and the other entities that form part of the United Nations system must reflect diplomatic best practices in their day-to-day functioning. They have a lot to learn from Member States in this regard.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the international community. The General Assembly can expect India's constructive support and participation in these efforts.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): Egypt associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation of your decision, Mr. President, to include the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly at the top of your priorities during the sixty-seventh session, and for your pledge to assist in advancing the revitalization agenda.

I take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representatives of the Gambia and Georgia for their efforts as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session, which led to the adoption of resolution 66/294. That resolution and the report (A/67/891) represent a strong basis for the discussions during the current session.

The increasing challenges facing our world today require, more than ever, a strong and responsive General Assembly, so that this universal body may play its leading role in global governance in the political, economical and social spheres. For more than two decades, Member States have adopted by consensus resolutions containing specific measures to revitalize the work of the General Assembly as the main deliberative, policy-making and representative principal organ of the United Nations. These measures were not fully implemented, due to the lack of political

will to ensure that the Assembly fulfils its mandate according to the Charter.

Egypt believes that the first step towards achieving tangible progress in the revitalization of the Assembly is to transform decisions into actions. The Ad Hoc Working Group should continue to evaluate the status of implementation of the provisions of all previously adopted resolutions to identify the obstacles hindering their implementation, and then specify what should be done to overcome them. One of the main obstacles facing the revitalization of the work of the Assembly is the Security Council's continued encroachment on its role and functions. The Council tends to redefine the scope of its competence through a broader interpretation of the issues that may constitute a threat to international peace and security.

We should strive to establish a mutually reinforcing and complementary relationship between the principal organs of the United Nations. It is not sufficient to claim that each individual body performs its functions in accordance with the Charter. It is necessary to promote greater coordination among them. The General Assembly should not be a mere forum for deliberations. It must also be a forum for finding solutions. It should assume a more proactive role in responding to emerging challenges of common concern to the international community. The adoption of resolutions 66/253 A and 66/253 B on the situation in Syria shows clearly that the Assembly can make decisions where the Council cannot.

As the current Chair of the Arab Group, Egypt, along with all the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, is eager to see the State of Palestine become a full Member of the United Nations. The least we can expect at this stage of the current session is that the General Assembly will adopt a resolution to upgrade Palestine's status to that of a non-member observer State at the United Nations, proving that the Assembly supports the principles of justice and equality without selectivity or politicization.

Egypt also commends you, Mr. President, for choosing "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means" as the overarching theme for the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. It is completely consistent with the objective of strengthening the role of the Assembly in the areas of international peace and security and serving the noble cause of preventing new conflicts and resolving existing ones. The Assembly should continue to increase the visibility of its work by interacting more with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Mr. President, your Office should be further strengthened through the allocation of more financial and human resources from the United Nations regular budget so that it can keep up with the growing demands, workload and responsibilities of the President of the General Assembly from one session to the next. It is not acceptable that the budget allocation for the Office has not increased since 1998. The establishment in 2010 of the Trust Fund in support of the Office of the President was not the best solution. No contribution was made to the Trust Fund during the sixty-sixth session. That is why the President's Office should not have to rely on voluntary contributions. Resources should be increased from within the regular budget in order not to affect the credibility or impartiality of the President's position.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. The General Assembly should be more involved at an early stage in the selection process and in identifying candidates for this key post.

Ms. Flores (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is linked to other processes under the wider umbrella of the United Nations reform. It should not be considered in isolation from the wider context of institutional reform of the United Nations. There is a dire need to address every element of the reform process with equal attention. The issue of the revitalization of the Assembly lies at the core of that process. In conclusion, I would particularly like to thank the President for his introduction of this item this morning, and for his inspirational statement. I would also like to assure him of the Egyptian delegation's full support for all his efforts to enhance the role of the General Assembly in achieving peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Mr. Singh (Malaysia): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the President for convening this meeting on an issue that is of particular importance to us and that we feel strongly about. It is pleasing to note that the President feels as strongly about it as we do. I would also like to express Malaysia's appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the Gambia for their efforts and leadership in steering the Ad Hoc

Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the Assembly's sixty-sixth session. We appreciate the convening of four separate thematic meetings that enabled Member States to clearly focus on various aspects of revitalization, one theme at a time. Those discussions, along with all the efforts by Member States, culminated in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/66/891), for which we should also thank the co-Chairs. On that note, I wish to align my statement with that made by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Year after year, revitalization remains a priority issue for the General Assembly. Despite the attention it attracts, we have managed to achieve only qualified success in revitalizing it. Over the years, we have seen some improvements in the Assembly's working methods, but they are minor. We have still failed to address the real issue of why the General Assembly must be revitalized. We should not forget that the key word here is "revitalization", not "minor improvements". The General Assembly is unquestionably the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is the highest authoritative body of the United Nations, since it represents all 193 Member States. We must therefore accord it the role and authority it rightly deserves.

My delegation firmly believes that the lack of implementation of General Assembly resolutions continues to be the biggest stumbling block to enhancing its role and effectiveness. We reiterate that no other weakness of the General Assembly undermines its relevance or effectiveness more than the failure to implement resolutions. Malaysia commends the Ad Hoc Working Group's decision to continue its review of the Assembly's resolutions on revitalization. We look forward to receiving the updated inventory of those resolutions, which will give Member States a better understanding of the reasons behind the failure to implement them. The Ad Hoc Working Group could then discuss the issue and find ways to overcome problems so as to ensure that the resolutions are implemented. This is the first step towards the ultimate goal of realizing the full implementation of all Assembly resolutions.

Malaysia continues to take the issue of encroachment seriously. We cannot emphasize enough the need for all principal organs, especially the two leading organs — the General Assembly and the Security Council — to faithfully respect each other's mandates, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Both organs must work together in consultation and cooperation to create a more harmonious working relationship. Encroachment by one organ on the mandate of the other would severely affect not only the functioning of the organ itself, but the entire United Nations machinery.

It is obvious that the role and activities of the President of the General Assembly have evolved significantly over the years. A greater number of issues and agenda items are now considered by the Assembly than was the case just a few years ago. Furthermore, the workload of the General Assembly now spans the whole year rather than being limited to its main session. It is therefore only natural that the Office of the President should be provided with the additional resources required to enable the President to efficiently and effectively perform the role that has been entrusted to him or her by the United Nations Charter.

While we recognize the benefits of the Trust Fund established to assist in the funding of the work of the President of the Assembly, it is nonetheless important that the funding from the regular budget be increased so that the Office of the President will no longer be dependent on the Trust Fund and voluntary contributions. In this regard, Malaysia looks forward to proposals to review the budget of the Office of the President of the General Assembly for the biennium 2014-2015.

On the subject of the appointment of the Secretary-General, Malaysia firmly believes that the Assembly needs to play a more meaningful role in the selection process. That process needs to be more transparent and inclusive of all Member States, as the Secretary-General represents all the Members of the United Nations and not merely the members of the Security Council. It is therefore important, when selecting and appointing the Secretary-General in future, to implement past resolutions, especially paragraphs 17 to 22 of the annex to resolution 60/286.

There is an undeniable need to focus on the substantive aspects of the revitalization process and to ensure that the General Assembly continues in its role as the principal policy-making and norm-setting organ of the United Nations. The issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly has been the subject of plenary debate since 1991. Given the number of years this issue has been considered, it is high time that all Member States approach the subject with openness

and the necessary political will to realize tangible and substantial progress. If the pace of reform continues to be as slow as it has been in the past, we will face the awkward task of revitalizing the revitalization process. This is something we should certainly avoid.

Mr. Sergeyev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the President for convening today's meeting.

The Russian delegation intends to continue to participate constructively in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at this session. We hope that the work of this Group will be balanced, realistic and depoliticized and will seek to enhance the effectiveness of the General Assembly. All initiatives and proposals must be based on the principle of strict respect for the distribution of powers among the principal United Nations organs, as set out in the Charter.

The emphasis in the work of the Group must be placed on the issue of improving the working methods of the General Assembly and streamlining its agenda. The Assembly's programme of work is in many ways overburdened, and it would therefore be appropriate to review the possibility of transferring some of its agenda items to a biennial or triennial cycle. It would also be appropriate to lighten the workload in terms of high-level meetings during the week of the general debate, when, due to the presence in New York of Heads of State and Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, there is an especially busy programme of events and meetings, including bilateral meetings. We should limit the number of high-level meetings during that period, and the remaining events should be evenly spread over the entire session of the Assembly.

We are prepared to examine proposals to enhance the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. However, we would point out that, as with any proposal that has financial implications for the United Nations regular budget, this issue must receive full consideration, in line with existing procedures, that is, in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. As to the General Assembly's role in selecting and appointing the Secretary-General, Russia has consistently advocated maintaining the current practice, based on Article 97 of the Charter, according to which the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

With respect to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, it seems that, to a large extent, this problem is related to the degree of realism and achievability of the goals and provisions of the original resolutions. Before a decision is proposed, it is important for us to ask ourselves how implementable it is in principle. Such an approach should also be followed in the Group's own work. We suggest that we adopt the line of "less is better".

Mr. Yaroshevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus attaches high priority to strengthening the role of the General Assembly. We support an enhanced role for the Assembly in resolving issues of international peace and security, in line with the United Nations Charter, and we want to maintain a balance between the principal organs of the United Nations in considering all issues on the United Nations agenda. We highlight the need to ensure proper implementation of General Assembly resolutions, to further enhance the role of the President of the Assembly and his Office, and to improve the methods for electing the Secretary-General and the working methods of the General Assembly.

The Belarus delegation commends the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. We are pleased to note the interactive debates that were held with the Chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly and representatives of the Secretariat and the effective work of the Chairs in organizing the negotiation process.

This year, on the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement, together with other participants in the negotiating process, a very important step, in our view, was taken towards enhancing the General Assembly's relevance and visibility. We can now can see it quite clearly when we simply open the *Journal of the United Nations*. Resolution 66/294, for the first time in many years, established the order in which the principal organs are set out in the *Journal*, in line with Article 7 of the Charter — that is, with the General Assembly first and then the Security Council. That is in line with the tradition that was followed in the early years of the Organization's existence.

With regard to the current session, the delegation of Belarus will continue to participate actively in the Ad Hoc Working Group. In particular, we believe that it is now urgently necessary to design and adopt mechanisms that will provide clear procedures for agreeing on

the fielding of candidatures for the Assembly's Main Committees and an order of rotation for the chairs and rapporteurs from the regional groups. Adopting such a mechanism will facilitate enhancing the role and authority of the Assembly, streamline current practices and establish a clear mechanism for the election of Chairs and bureaux of the Main Committees. We call upon our partners to take an active part in working on the issue in order to achieve an effective and mutually acceptable decision.

Belarus is convinced that stepping up work to revitalize the General Assembly will also help us to make progress in the work of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. In that regard, we express our support for the initiative of Venezuela and Cuba, which is being considered in the framework of the Special Committee. Issues raised by our friends deserve serious and balanced examination, considering the functions and competencies of the General Assembly and the Security Council and the substantive decisions taken by them.

It is strategically important that, in the work to reanimate the activities of the General Assembly, the letter and spirit of the Charter be followed, as the Charter establishes that universal organ in the primary role, with its higher flexibility and capacity to promptly, appropriately and effectively respond to current issues of international life. In other words, the Assembly should be the world's "number one situation room" and should be considered as such. In that connection, the Belarus delegation shares the view of the President of the General Assembly stated earlier in the meeting that the General Assembly must "adapt... to the new times". The world that is changing before our very eyes, with globalization and technological revolutions and other types of revolutions, requires that the process of optimizing the work of the Assembly be a permanent, even uninterrupted, process.

Successful businessmen are convinced that they have to work every minute of the day on improving business processes. Businessmen are responsible for businesses and their employees, and they make profit their target. All of us regard as of paramount importance the more serious and important values of our shared responsibility, which is unconditional and far greater. Therefore our work — the work of the General Assembly — must conform to the very highest contemporary standards of efficacy, quality and practical results.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At present, the international situation is undergoing complex and profound changes. Under the new situation, the international community expects the United Nations to play a greater role in safeguarding world peace, promoting common development and strengthening international cooperation. The General Assembly is the Organization's pre-eminent policy deliberation body and one of its most important Charter bodies. The numerous Member States, particularly the developing countries, would like to see the General Assembly further enhance its prestige and efficiency and better fulfil the duties entrusted to it by the Charter.

The revitalization of the General Assembly bears on the vital interests of all Member States and has important, far-reaching implications for enhancing the prestige and credibility of the United Nations. China commends the President of the General Assembly for making revitalization of the Assembly one of his priority items and supports giving full play to the Assembly's policy deliberation function. The Assembly, on the basis of the development of the international situation and targeting the salient challenges faced by the United Nations in all fields, should emphasize deliberating on and dealing with important questions of common concern to Member States, particularly those involving the vital interests of the developing countries.

The General Assembly should give particular attention to, and step up efforts on, development issues so as to play a greater role in advancing international cooperation for development. It should strengthen its arrangements for division of work and cooperation with organs such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council so that each can deploy its full strength and step up information exchange and interaction.

On matters regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with the Security Council, on the basis of the division of work set out in the Charter. China supports improving the Assembly's working methods, simplifying its decision-making procedures and enhancing its efficiency. Enhancing the quality of reports and documents should be emphasized. Reports should be concise and clear, and analytical recommendations should be well targeted. Pragmatic, action-oriented

work styles should be developed. Member States should also respect the solemnity of General Assembly resolutions and ensure their full implementation so as to safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the Assembly.

The effective functioning of the Office of the President is an important guarantee of the smooth work of the Assembly. China supports the strengthening of the Office of the President in both manpower and budgetary terms, particularly in order to resolve current difficulties faced by developing countries when carrying out the functions of the presidency.

The numerous Member States have high hopes for the revitalization of the General Assembly. China firmly supports the President's efforts to that end, for a more effective role for the Assembly in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of global development. China wishes to continue to advance the implementation of the series of resolutions on the revitalization of the Assembly within the framework of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We hope that the work will move steadily forward on the basis of democratic consultations, going from easier to more difficult issues in an orderly and gradual manner. China will work with other Member States for good progress on the important agenda item of the revitalization of the General Assembly during the current session of the Assembly.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba endorses the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represents the position of 120 countries. We wish to add some remarks in our national capacity.

First, the Cuban delegation wishes to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly for their commendable work during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Under their leadership, the Ad Hoc Working Group contributed to strengthening the leading role that the General Assembly plays in the system of international relations and in the Organization.

It is unacceptable that numerous General Assembly resolutions, despite being an important body of law, have not been implemented. That also applies to the many resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly, whose level of implementation is unacceptably low despite their having been adopted by consensus. As we have stated on previous occasions, the task of revitalizing the General Assembly cannot be limited to speeches. The General Assembly enjoys all the legal prerogatives necessary to act. We therefore hope that this year, the Ad Hoc Working Group will adopt a broad and flexible agenda aimed at achieving ambitious goals.

The General Assembly is the principal organ for deliberation, the adoption of policies and representation of the United Nations. Owing to its broad and democratic nature, it enjoys legitimacy and great prestige. It is the maximum expression of the principle of sovereign equality among States. The revitalization of its work is an issue of the greatest importance.

The main obstacle to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly is the lack of political will on the part of certain States that attempt to put their narrow political interests above the views of the majority. The revitalization issue is therefore not a technical matter, as some countries would have us believe, but fundamentally a political issue. It is necessary to strike the appropriate balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its concern over the attempts of the Security Council to establish legal norms and definitions, overlooking the fact that, under Article 13 of the Charter, the progressive development of international law and its codification are the exclusive responsibility of the General Assembly. Those dangerous trends and the increasing broadening of the agenda of the Security Council beyond its competence must immediately cease because they are clear violations of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and restrict the debate, transparency and democratic way in which the problems of today's world should be addressed.

We would like to take this opportunity to urgently appeal once again for a radical reform of the Security Council that transforms it into the transparent, participatory and democratic organ demanded by the international community. The action of the Security Council and its members is subject to international law, in particular the Charter.

We cannot speak of an Organization in consonance with the system of contemporary international relations without reforming the Security Council and placing

the General Assembly at the centre of debate and multilateral work. The revitalization of the General Assembly is essential in order to achieve a genuine reform of the United Nations. We cannot be satisfied with our work until the General Assembly fully exercises all its functions and powers.

Cuba reiterates that only a universal and democratic organ, such as the General Assembly, can tackle the existing global problems, whose solutions exceed the limited capacity of a country or a group of countries, however powerful they believe themselves to be.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): At the outset, Indonesia thanks the President for convening this important debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which it fervently supports. Indonesia commends his strong commitment to strengthening the General Assembly's role in line with the Charter of the United Nations. We pledge our full support for his efforts and those of Member States towards realizing an effective Assembly.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We welcome the recent adoption of resolution 66/294, mandating the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly to continue its work on the issue during the sixty-seventh session. Resolution 66/294 underscores the zeal of delegations to reinforce the gravity of the reform process of the Assembly as an invaluable United Nations principal organ.

That the Assembly alone uniquely reflects the aspirations and concerns of all Member States must elevate the status of its revitalization efforts. We all need to participate to adequately support the work on strengthening the Assembly's role. We therefore stress the importance of this year's Ad Hoc Working Group continuing to build upon the results of previous sessions and how vital it is for us to support the Group as it carries out its work. Allow me to make a few observations on advancing the work of that Group

First, we emphasize updating and utilizing the inventory chart annexed to the annual reports of the Ad Hoc Working Group. The chart has proved to be a valuable tool in systematically identifying, monitoring and proposing solutions to the issue of the Assembly's revitalization. While my delegation is mindful of the sensitive nature of that exercise, with its obvious political, legal and budgetary implications, it is important for everyone to be aware of both the deficit and the progress in the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions on making the Assembly robust.

We therefore reiterate our request that the Secretariat update the chart and provide the Working Group with information about the challenges and obstacles hindering the timely and concrete implementation of all relevant resolutions pertaining to the various themes stated in the inventory charts.

Regarding the selection and appointment of the heads of United Nations agencies and senior officials of the Secretariat, we stress that their selection and appointment must also conform to the criteria of a more balanced geographical representation.

Secondly, we underline that a faithful implementation of United Nations resolutions is vital to strengthening the oversight role of the Assembly. In that regard, we concur that a strong oversight role of the Assembly is needed in the management and procurement of United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as in the wider United Nations system's post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, including in the areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and mediation.

Indonesia is pleased that the theme of this year's session focuses on the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. That focus should be sustained. As we have already proposed, it would therefore be fitting that, just as peacekeeping issues have a forum in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, and post-conflict peacebuilding issues in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the issues of preventive diplomacy, mediation and peaceful conflict resolution should also have a dedicated United Nations intergovernmental forum. We also believe that the Assembly, which is one of the parent bodies of the PBC, should play a more effective role in guiding and supporting the Commission's work.

As my third and last point, I would submit that it is not for any shortage of resolutions or decisions that the Assembly has not yet fully claimed its Charter role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is chiefly the lack of political will and necessary support that is the cause. The many mutually shared and complex problems of our globalized world today will not be solved if we do not come together and strengthen the United Nations

multilateral framework that we ourselves created for that purpose. Let us rise above our differences and empower and support the Assembly to perform its work effectively.

I affirm Indonesia's readiness to work actively and constructively with all delegations in our common endeavour to enhance the authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first of all like to thank the Ambassadors of the Gambia and Georgia for their efforts as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session. While aligning ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, my delegation would like to make the following remarks.

With regard to enhancing the role and the authority of the General Assembly, my country's delegation believes that the revitalization of the work of the Assembly is a key element in the comprehensive reform of the United Nations since, aside from the Assembly's role in establishing the norms and codification of international law, it is the principal deliberative and decision-making body and the most representative entity of the Organization. We affirm the need to continue strengthening the work and the role of that important organ by stepping up our efforts. At the same time, we must ensure that the relevant Assembly resolutions are implemented as a basic requirement for making progress in that area.

We believe that enhancing the role and authority of the Assembly means including urgent issues of common interest to the international community in its agenda. We must also ensure that the Assembly adapts rapidly to the global changes so that it maintains its strength and effectiveness and is able to meet emerging challenges. At the same time, we would like to reiterate that the Assembly should organize thematic debates. Such debates are a forum for interaction, allowing exchanges of views on current issues of great international importance to the Assembly. It would also enable us to interact with civil society. We hope that such debates will continue under Mr. Jeremić's presidency of the Assembly during this sixty-seventh session in order to achieve tangible and specific outcomes.

Strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly also requires that its role in maintaining international peace and security be recognized. Although Articles 12 and 24 of the Charter invest the Security Council with the primary responsibility in that area, that responsibility should not be the Council's sole domain. In our view, the Assembly must respond more rapidly to relevant issues that affect international peace and security.

We also affirm the need to improve the quality and content of the annual Security Council reports submitted to the Assembly; they should be more analytical and comprehensive so as to reflect the context in which the Council resolutions were adopted and the situations in which the Council was unable to take any action. Periodic meetings should be held among the heads of the principal organs of the United Nations, and Member States should be informed of the outcomes of those meetings on a regular basis. It is also important to promote cooperation and coordination and exchanges of information between the Assembly and those organs through regular and transparent mechanisms that specifically provide for the participation of the countries directly affected.

With regard to improving the working methods of the Assembly, my delegation believes that, while a number of resolutions have been adopted with a view to improving the working methods of the Main Committees and the convening of high-level meetings, it is nevertheless important to study thoroughly some relevant proposals, such as the need to streamline the work of the Committees, with the support of all Member States. We must also facilitate the access of developing countries to detailed and updated information on the websites of the Main Committees and make such information available in all the official languages, including Arabic. We should ensure that resolutions, reports and other documents are concise and that there is an exchange of best practices among the Committees, taking into account the specific nature of each Committee. Arrangements for strengthening the coordination of efforts and setting up schedules for high-level meetings so that they are optimally distributed, for the benefit of all, should also be thoroughly considered.

Regarding the appointment of the Secretary-General and the senior managers of the Secretariat, I reiterate our thanks to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to organize broader consultations with Member States, based on cooperation and transparency, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's

performance. We hope that during this session we will focus on improving the selection process for senior managers of the Secretariat, while taking into account the recommendations set out in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/65/34), submitted during the sixty-fifth session.

With regard to strengthening the support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, we believe that it is necessary to provide the Office with adequate financial and human resources to allow the President of the Assembly to fulfil his function as well as possible. That support should at least reflect the changes in the regular budget. We also stress the notion of strengthening the Assembly's institutional memory and benefiting from lessons learned, in the interest of a smooth transition from one presidency to the next.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country's support for resolution 66/294, adopted in September, which provides for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. In our view, the priority of that Working Group should be to assess the difficulties in implementing resolutions so that the revitalization process can move forward.

Mr. Pope (United States of America): The United States would like to add its thanks to last year's co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassador Waffa-Ogoo of the Gambia and Ambassador Lomaia of Georgia, for their attention to this issue during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Their leadership culminated in the recently adopted resolution 66/294, which serves as a basis for our continued work on the topic. We also offer the incoming co-Chairs our full support once they are named. We look forward to working with fellow Member States as we consider the best options for revitalizing the General Assembly and build on the recommendations that we made to the Working Group this past session.

The United States is committed to multilateral engagement and a strong United Nations system. We recognize the important contributions of the General Assembly to fulfilling the mission of the United Nations. We hope that our discussions and the efforts of the Working Group will be constructive in allowing us to consider how we can improve working methods to better enable the Assembly to carry out its work.

We continue to advocate for measures to ensure the improved efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the United Nations system. Therefore, streamlining and prioritizing the agenda and improving the practices and working methods of the Main Committees will be the primary focus of our interactions with the Working Group during the sixty-seventh session.

As part of our efforts to ensure that the General Assembly remains relevant, we should also encourage the more timely publishing of General Assembly resolutions soon after their adoption. Informing others of our work will highlight the important issues that we cover and would encourage more expeditious implementation of General Assembly resolutions by Member States. Just as providing information to the world outside of New York is important, the General Assembly would be better served by increased interaction between the heads of the principal organs of the United Nations and the Chairs of the Main Committees and the President of the General Assembly.

That could perhaps be accomplished by exchanging views and priorities at the start of each new General Assembly session. Greater cooperation and increased coordination among the organs of the United Nations are critical for enabling us to achieve our goal of streamlining agendas and reducing wasteful overlap. We will continue to work with other delegations on our proposals to improve working methods, such as discontinuing the practice of adopting resolutions on outdated or obscure topics, merging or clustering items closely related in substance, proposing comprehensive or omnibus resolutions, and encouraging Member States to exercise greater discipline in their submission of draft resolutions, that is, to be more deliberate in keeping their statements succinct and to focus on key themes. We encourage Member States to consider reviewing existing resolutions biennially or triennially, rather than annually, and to exercise greater discipline in their submission of draft resolutions.

We also propose setting deadlines for achieving objectives, encouraging General Assembly working groups to complete their work on time, and rationalizing the General Assembly's meeting schedule to allow for widespread Member State participation. We hope to see progress on those goals during the sixty-seventh session.

The roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council in selecting the Secretary-General are clearly defined in the Charter. The General Assembly should

not, as a priority for its own revitalization, consider pursuing changes to the Council's role in selecting a candidate for Secretary-General.

My delegation looks forward to working closely with the President of the General Assembly and with our counterparts from other delegations towards a constructive dialogue on concrete reform.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, on his assumption of duties as President and to thank him for his leadership in advancing the revitalization agenda. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, as well as to Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Mrs. Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of Gambia, who served as co-Chairs of the previous Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. Their initiative and dedicated work culminated in a report (A/66/891) that included the text of resolution 66/294, which was adopted by consensus on the final day of the previous session.

As the body in which all 193 Member States participate, the General Assembly is universally recognized as the most representative organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly is mandated to address any issue and questions falling under its responsibility, in accordance with the Charter, except as provided in Article 12.1.

During the course of this year's general debate, which was convened under the theme of "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", we witnessed a number of thoughtful statements by dignitaries along with various side events on the full spectrum of international issues. That demonstrated once again the importance of this body in multilateral diplomacy. The General Assembly can offer a useful forum as we endeavour to adapt to today's complex society. In the words of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's address to the General Assembly on 26 September, we need "to give adequate consideration to future generations and solve disputes calmly by reason under rules" (*A/67/PV.9, p. 47*) . The revitalization of the General Assembly is thus of high importance. Building upon mutual trust and confidence among Member States, we must make steady progress towards achieving feasible and realistic results on this matter.

During this first week of substantive debate on individual items on the agenda of the current session, let me present Japan's general views on several key issues.

First, it is essential to strengthen the relations between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations. With respect to the Security Council in particular, while the Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly may play a complementary role when the Council fails to fully exercise its functions, as in the case of the Syrian Arab Republic. Such functions of the General Assembly highlight the necessity of establishing a better relationship between the two organs. Regular consultations between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly would be one practical way of proceeding in that regard. We look forward to a debate on the annual report of the Security Council in November this year with a view to deepening discussions on the matter.

Secondly, with a view to enhancing its public awareness, the General Assembly must demonstrate to the people of the world that it is an organ that is capable of responding adequately to emerging challenges of common concern and of producing results-oriented outcomes. In that regard, thematic debates on relevant current issues, such as that held in April 2012 on disaster risk reduction, are most welcome. That practice has proved to be a useful instrument for encouraging broader and more flexible exchanges of views outside the constraints of the formal agenda. Resolution 66/290 on human security, adopted by consensus in September, is another notable achievement of the General Assembly. I am confident that the General Assembly will continue to make notable contributions to putting human security into practice.

The useful outcomes produced by the General Assembly lose their meaning if they are not implemented and followed up. Repeated non-implementation of General Assembly resolutions would over time risk diminishing the authority of the Assembly. My delegation will actively participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly in conducting a review of the inventory of General Assembly resolutions as agreed upon during the previous session.

Thirdly, it is important to rationalize the work of the General Assembly with a view to better enabling it

to focus its activities on current challenges and events of common interest to the international community. It is appropriate, therefore, to continue to consider ways to streamline and prioritize the agenda of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. Various possibilities, such as having biennial or triennial reviews of agenda items and clustering or eliminating agenda items, should be given proper consideration, based on the relevant resolutions.

We also need to consider how to improve working methods so as to carry out the Assembly's work efficiently. For instance, we recall that Member States were not able to reach consensus on the composition of a working group on sustainable development goals before the opening of the current session, as was mandated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex). The question of the underrepresentation of the Asia-Pacific States, in terms of equitable geographical representation, might also be posed in that regard.

In the light of the considerable importance of the issue, Japan looks forward to having constructive discussions aimed at further enhancing the role of the General Assembly. I would like to reiterate once again Japan's commitment to making an active contribution to that end.

Mr. Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh): I am pleased to address the General Assembly plenary in this joint debate. Allow me first of all to join previous speakers in thanking Ambassador Waffa-Ogoo of the Gambia and Ambassador Lomaia of Georgia for their excellent work during the past session as the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. Their joint stewardship resulted in the adoption of resolution 66/294 in September, which we consider to be a very good basis for future discussion on the matter.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a critical component of the wider reform of the United Nations. The continued attention the issue is receiving indicates the collective desire of the United Nations membership to see the General Assembly attain its rightful place in global discourse. We are aware that reform is a continuous process, but we cannot discuss the issue ad infinitum. As we will embark on another round of discussions soon, we must make sure that the exercise results, within a reasonable period of time, in decisions that can be implemented.

There are a number of issues relating to the revitalization of the General Assembly that have been discussed at length over the past years and have been reflected in the relevant resolutions. The views and positions of my delegation are generally in line with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I will, however, touch on a few points to reinforce our position.

The objective of the revitalization of the Assembly is to strengthen its role and position as the chief deliberative, legislative, policy-making and representative body of the international community. The General Assembly should take the lead role in setting the global agenda and in formulating multilateral approaches to solving global concerns. The General Assembly is the forum in which all members of the international community have the opportunity to exchange ideas on an equal footing about issues of common interest and where global consensus can be reached and solutions to challenges can be found.

We recognize the importance of close cooperation and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations, especially among the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. In that regard, we welcome the regular meetings being held between the heads of those organs. That practice should continue in order to promote system-wide coherence and effectiveness.

There is a need for the two leading organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council, to work in concert and create a harmonious relationship for maintaining peace and security and fostering development. In so doing, both organs should respect each other's mandates as provided for in the Charter. We are concerned about the encroachment of the Security Council on the prerogatives of the General Assembly. It is being done through extremely broad interpretations of Charter provisions on threats to international peace and security.

Although several General Assembly resolutions have been adopted expressing concern on the issue, the encroachment unfortunately continues and has even increased in recent years. In our view, the agenda of the Council is already overburdened with real threats to international peace and security, leaving it little time to deal with peripheral issues, and it should therefore desist from doing so.

The role and activities of the President of the General Assembly have significantly evolved over the years. It is essential to ensure sufficient and predictable financial and human resources for the efficient and successful functioning of the Office of the President. We welcome the measures already adopted for its strengthening. We also welcome the decision to allocate dedicated staff within the Secretariat for coordinating the transitions between Presidents. It is important that funding for the Office from the regular budget be increased, so as to avoid having the President be dependent on the Trust Fund and on voluntary contributions to manage the Office. In our view, such dependence would affect the credibility and impartiality of that important position.

The General Assembly should have a strong role in the appointments of the senior management of the United Nations Secretariat. The selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General should be more transparent and inclusive. The process should involve the entire membership of the United Nations. Many resolutions have been adopted assigning the General Assembly a greater role in the process. We regret that most of the provisions regarding the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General are being overlooked. In that regard, we call for full implementation of the relevant provisions in considering future appointments.

The objective of revitalization is to render the Assembly more efficient and effective. It will require improvement of working methods and an adjustment of the agenda to meet current global realities. Discussions on improving working methods have been exhaustive, and we recognize some improvements. We appreciate the convening of thematic debates and high-level events aimed at establishing a broad international understanding of current issues. The General Committee also has an important role to play in considering ways and means to further improve the Assembly's working methods and improve its efficiency.

The agenda of the General Assembly has grown steadily in response to global demands and expectations. That has also led to a reduction in the actual time available to focus on any particular issue. We concur with the numerous General Assembly resolutions that call for rationalizing and streamlining the agenda so that we can pay more attention to priority issues. We support the biennialization, triennialization, clustering or even elimination of some items, while preserving options to add new items.

The number of reports requested should also be rationalized, so as to improve the quality and precision of documents and to permit more focused deliberation. We suggest that all of those actions be undertaken with the clear consent of the co-sponsoring or concerned States. There should be no attempt to employ artificial deadlines or so-called sunset clauses to remove an item without prior approval of the General Assembly or consent of the concerned State.

The issue of revitalization is a matter that requires political will. Technical improvement is possible through implementation of the proposals already made, but a true revitalization of the body would require genuine political will and openness. Let us garner such political will to make the General Assembly a truly deliberative and decision-making body for the benefit of all of humankind.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am pleased that the General Assembly is focusing due attention on the old yet crucially important issue of the revitalization of its work within the core of the working agenda of this sixty-seventh session. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of the Gambia, and Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, for their excellent stewardship of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the past session, leading to the adoption of resolution 66/294.

The Islamic Republic of Iran aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which, we believe, introduced a number of key points into this important debate. I would also like to make a few additional remarks and underline some points of particular significance.

The General Assembly debate on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly, held in December (see A/66/PV.70), reflected the urgent need to strengthen the central role of the Assembly in addressing issues of genuine concern to the international community in the political, economic and social arenas. In that connection, Iran and all the members of the Non-Aligned Movement have demonstrated their renewed commitment to engaging in a meaningful effort to reinforce the work of the General Assembly.

Since 1991, we have adopted 20 resolutions containing specific measures aimed at revitalizing and enhancing the work of the General Assembly as the most representative and chief deliberative and policy-making principal organ of the United Nations. Unfortunately, those measures, adopted by consensus, have not been fully implemented, owing mainly to the lack of the political will needed to ensure that the Assembly plays its leading role in joint global governance. A thorough evaluation of the status of implementation of General Assembly resolutions and a clear identification of the underlying reasons for their lack of implementation are therefore crucial to gradually eliminating the constraints that still prevent the revitalization process from achieving its full potential.

The fact that a large number of United Nations resolutions have dealt with the revitalization of the role and authority of the Genera. Assembly clearly demonstrates how important the enhancement of the central role and authority of that organ is for the general membership. The Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the credibility and centrality of the United Nations in the formulation of multilateral approaches to resolving international issues. That was the role intended for the Assembly as expressed in Article 10 of the Charter, namely, that it should discuss any questions or matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any of the organs provided for in the Charter. We should therefore increase our efforts to explore concrete ways and means towards full realization of the Assembly's functions and powers, as laid down in the Charter.

Regarding relations between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, in particular, has been a matter of extensive debate, especially in the context of the various reform efforts, for many years. A considerable number of Assembly resolutions have established various criteria aimed at clarifying the relationship between those two important principal organs. The Charter confers important functions and responsibilities on both bodies.

Nonetheless, in recent years we have witnessed numerous cases of the Security Council's gradual but persistent encroachment on the functions and powers of the Assembly and other organs, such as the Economic and Social Council. We are particularly concerned about the Security Council's practice of setting standards, making laws and establishing definitions in areas beyond its competence. Let me recall Article 13 of the Charter, according to which the General Assembly, as the only universal organ representing every State Member of the United Nations, is primarily responsible for the progressive development of international law and its codification.

With regard to the role and responsibility of the General Assembly in the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General and in order to comply with Article 97 of the Charter, we should not relegate the role of the General Assembly to that of a rubber stamp. In our view, there is a strong desire among a large majority of the Members of the Organization to articulate and improve the procedure for the selection of the Secretary-General by giving the General Assembly a more meaningful and determining role in it.

At the same time, ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is also an important factor in enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President by allocating to it sufficient human and financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations, so as to enable all Member States, developed and developing, to have an equal opportunity to assume the presidency of the Assembly efficiently and effectively.

In conclusion, we believe that focusing only on procedural aspects and the working methods of the Assembly, important as they are, will not lead to the comprehensive improvement in its work that is long overdue. For that, a fundamental shift, an all-embracing approach and a vigorous effort are needed. The revitalization of the General Assembly, as part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, is a dynamic and continuing process. We should remain committed and constructive throughout that ongoing exercise, with a view to strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly as the most representative and chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations. My delegation stands ready to participate actively in the future deliberations to be held in that framework in a transparent, open and inclusive manner.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua would like to thank the President for organizing this meeting. Nicaragua endorses the statement made by the

representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which expressed our position and that of the majority of the States Members of this Organization. Our delegation reiterates its firm commitment to the process of revitalizing and democratizing the General Assembly, and we wish to continue to work constructively, so that the Assembly can be seen to be, in every aspect, the most representative and legitimate organ of the Organization.

As we have stated on various occasions, Nicaragua considers the democratization of the United Nations to be very important; in order to achieve that goal we must continue to work to restore the authority of the General Assembly and enable it to function as the chief deliberative, standard-setting and democratic organ of the Organization. We believe that the process of revitalizing the work of the Assembly must be universal, transparent and accountable, arrived at through open and inclusive consultations, which are a critical component of United Nations reform, including reform of the Security Council. The Council cannot continue to usurp the functions and powers of the General Assembly. The process of electing the Secretary-General is also very important.

Carrying out that initiative will require restoring and increasing the authority of the General Assembly, which in turn will require restoring its functions and jurisdiction and strengthening its relations and collaboration with other organs of the Organization. Such a reinvigoration of the General Assembly would make it able to answer the needs of all 193 Member States equally and fulfil the principle of the equality of all Members.

A similar reinvigoration is essential for the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Measures must be taken and procedures put in place to augment its human and financial resources. Every State should have the possibility of presiding over the Assembly. Financial considerations should not be an impediment. Increased funding for the Office is therefore important to strengthening the General Assembly.

The Nicaraguan delegation believes that the General Assembly should more rigorously fulfil its responsibilities in the nomination and appointment of the Secretary-General, and should engage Member States' participation in a more inclusive way. Likewise, all Member States should have increased input into the debate about and the election of candidates. It is also important to say that all resolutions adopted by consensus on the revitalization of the Assembly should be implemented fully and as quickly as possible, so as to actually achieve that goal.

We must rebuff all attempts to minimize the achievements and importance of the General Assembly, to diminish its role and functions or to impugn its relevance and credibility. For the good of all of the peoples we represent, the voice and the votes of all States Members of the Organization should be ever more loudly heard. Nicaragua will continue to support all efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the General Assembly, and we are always ready to engage in constructive debate on any issue that will lead to improving the work of our Organization.

Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar (Pakistan): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate, which deals with a subject of paramount importance for Member States. Pakistan pledges its full support and cooperation.

We appreciate the work done by the two co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, as well as that of their predecessors. We also align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the past two decades, much effort has been directed towards the shared goal of revitalizing this unique and universal body. It has been a worthwhile pursuit for several reasons. Together we have made considerable progress in rationalizing and streamlining the work of the Committees. Our collective effort has led to increased financial savings and efficiency gains. We have also raised the profile of the General Assembly.

However, for many of us, the revitalization debate seems to be losing vitality. Concerns persist over a range of issues, including the non-implementation of resolutions, the growing encroachment by the Security Council on the role and authority of the Assembly, the marginalization of Assembly's role in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and others. Perhaps, we first need to revitalize the revitalization debate.

As to the reform of the Security Council, it can be meaningful only if it is decided with the widest possible margin of agreement and in a spirit of compromise and flexibility. Any exercise in reform should make the

Council more democratic and accountable to the general membership and not create new centres of privilege.

In a new debate on revitalization, it would be useful to focus on two mutually reinforcing aspects, efficiency and efficacy. In some ways, considerable discussion has already taken place on improving the working methods of United Nations bodies, including the Assembly and its Committees. In fact, several measures have been adopted, including a more streamlined programme of work, the biennialization or triennialization of agenda resolutions and the early selection of the Chairs of the Committees and Bureaus.

However, those steps have essentially focused on efficiency and rationalization, and much progress has indeed been made on that count. Yet, to many of us, the effectiveness and authority of the Assembly seems to remain a largely unfulfilled task. We must therefore dig deeper and identify the real causes behind the conundrum whereby efficiency gains seemingly continue to defeat the larger political imperative of effectiveness. We look forward to a more focused debate on the correlation between the objectives of efficiency and effectiveness.

It may also be worthwhile to explore new ideas about how to bring more vigour, visibility and attention to the revitalization debate. We propose that the Ad Hoc Working Group examine the possibility of convening a high-level meeting in the future. We support the Non-Aligned Movement's suggestion in that regard and look forward to exchanging views within the Working Group.

Mr. Workie (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me to join others in commending the Permanent Representatives of the Gambia and Georgia for their very hard and valuable work in co-facilitating the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the previous session. Allow me also to align my delegation with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The General Assembly is not only one of the principal organs of the United Nations but also its most representative and chief deliberative, policy-making body. No other intergovernmental body in the world enjoys such a universal membership or covers such a broad spectrum of issues as the General Assembly. That breadth of membership and scope has a direct impact on international peace and security.

We strongly believe that the revitalization of the General Assembly will help strengthen the determination of Member States to pursue multilateralism, which will, in turn, have a major and far-reaching impact on rebuilding the authority and credibility of the United Nations system as a whole. In that regard, we wish to underline the critical importance of the Ad Hoc Working Group, and we urge it to build upon its progress in previous sessions. To that end, we are convinced that resolutions 65/315 and 66/294 in particular, along with other earlier resolutions, can and should serve as the basis for the work of Ad Hoc Working Group.

As for the relationship of the General Assembly to the other principal organs of the United Nations, my delegation is of the view that it remains important to improve transparency, the exchange of information and cooperation. The General Assembly should benefit from information about meetings between the President of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as meetings involving the Chairs of subsidiary bodies.

Periodic briefings by the President of the General Assembly on his recent activities, including official travel, continue to be an appreciated practice and are a valuable source of information. We also appreciate the continued practice of holding periodic informal briefings by the Secretary-General on his priorities, travels and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations, and we encourage him to continue with that practice.

On the issue of working methods, we would like to stress the need for the further rationalization and streamlining of the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, so as to better define the focus and avoid duplication in our deliberations. In that regard, leadership by the Chairs and the Bureaux of the Main Committees is of particular importance. Although each Main Committee is master of its own rules of procedure, we believe that streamlining and standardizing certain rules would lead to greater efficient in the work of the Committees.

While noting with appreciation the progress achieved so far, we feel that debates in the General Assembly have often shown duplication, resulting in the adoption of overlapping resolutions without an effective mechanism for assessing and evaluating their implementation, with the result that the assessment's

relevance or effectiveness in helping to achieve the desired outcomes is undermined. In that regard, we are in favour of launching the regular review of resolutions and decisions adopted previously by the Assembly and of making the necessary adjustments on the basis of the results stemming from their implementation.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. Our view on the subject is that, without prejudice to Article 97 of the Charter, the Assembly should play a more meaningful role in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We share the views expressed by others that there must be substantive interaction between the candidates and the Assembly and that due regard must continue to be given to regional rotation.

Ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is also essential to improving the role and authority of the Assembly, including through enhancing the institutional memory of that Office. In that regard, resolution 66/294, which allocates the necessary budget to and strengthens the human resources component of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, is of critical importance.

In conclusion, Ethiopia is ready, as in the past, to extend its cooperation and looks forward to doing so by working with the Ad Hoc Working Group during the current session. We believe that the continuation of the discussion within the Ad Hoc Working Group contributes to moving forward not only the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly but also the enhancement of the overall reform efforts of the United Nations system, including the Security Council.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the agenda items before us. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 115 and 116.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.